

Appl. No. : 09/470,377
Filed : December 22, 1999

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the invention. Claim 10 has been amended to correct a clerical error. Claims 15 and 19 were previously canceled. Claim 22 has been added, which includes substantially the same limitations as in Claim 1. Accordingly, Claims 1-14, 16-18 and 20-22 are pending in this application. The amendments do not constitute the addition of new matter to the specification. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 11 and 16-18 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 11 and 16-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimasa et al. (EP 0 884 691 A2) in view of Hisatomi et al. (JP411232026). Claim 1 has been amended for clarification. The remaining claims are ultimately dependent on Claim 1. The claims as amended herein could not be obvious over the references as explained below.

Hisatomi et al. discloses “displaying an image of ribs on the display device” (see Figs. 4, 5 and 7) and “the user can select the cursor on the display only by blind rotary operation without watching an operating device itself” (see abstract and paragraph 0042). However, Hisatomi et al. does not teach (A) “the image on the display has substantially the same geometrical shape as the touch-operation guide shape formed with the ribs.” and (B) “the operation function items are superposed on the image.” which are recited in Claim 1 as amended herein. This combination is not also taught by Yoshimasa et al. This feature allows a user to effectively perform blind touch operation without high operability and accuracy, even when the operation involves complicate functions. In the absence of the above features, neither Hisatomi et al. nor Yoshimasa et al. could perform complicate functions by blind touch operation.

Thus, a combination of Yoshimasa et al. and Hisatomi et al. could not lead to the present invention. Claims 1 as well as the claims dependent thereon could not obvious over the references. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

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Claims 3-9, 12-14, 20, and 21 have been allowed. Claim 10 has been objected to, but would be allowable if appropriately rewritten. Claim 10 is dependent ultimately on Claim 1, and at least for the reason, Claim 10 should be allowable as it is.

New Claim 22

Claim 22 recites substantially all limitations of Claim 20 and additional limitations. Thus, Claim 22 is also patentable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the Applicant's amendments to the claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 3, 2004

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